

**CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE  
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM**

Property Name: 2750 Bird Hill Road Survey Number: WO- 321

Property Address: 2750 Bird Hill Road, Girdletree, Worcester  
County

Project: CDBG/Rehab Agency: WO Co. Housing

Site visit by MHT Staff: X no \_\_\_ yes Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

District Name: Girdletree Historic District Survey Number: WO-321

[illegible]

Criteria:      A        B        X     C        D      Considerations:      A        B        C        D        E        F        G      None

The resource x contributes/\_\_\_\_ does not contribute to the historic significance of this historic district in:

<u>X</u>	Location	<u>X</u>	Design	<u>X</u>	Setting	<u>X</u>	Materials
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X	Workmanship	X	Feeling	X	Association
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Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)

The property located at 2750 Bird Hill Road in Girdletree in Worcester County, MD., is potentially located within the boundaries of a National Register-eligible historic district. Girdletree, Maryland is an architecturally significant rural village containing approximately 100 structures dating between 1860 and 1930. The crossroads village includes, most notably, a dense and intact group of commercial structures that date from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as well as two churches, the old passenger station, freight station as well multiple houses and their associated outbuildings.

The 1-1/2-story frame dwelling at 2750 Bird Hill Road is located near the center of town and, though it has been altered by additions and new materials, including siding and new windows, would be considered an historic resource within the historic district. However, further research is necessary to delineate the boundaries for the proposed historic district.

Documentation on the property is presented in: Review and Compliance


Prepared by: Paul Touart, Architectural Historian

Kim Prothro Williams 2/21/96  
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services Date

TR program concurrence: ☒ yes ☐ no ☐ not applicable

Alonso Padenti  
Reviewer, NR program

2-26-96.  
Date



Survey No. WO-321

**MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT**

**I. Geographic Region:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eastern Shore	(all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Shore	(Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's)
<input type="checkbox"/> Piedmont	(Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Maryland	(Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

**II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Paleo-Indian	10000-7500 B.C.
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Archaic	7500-6000 B.C.
<input type="checkbox"/> Middle Archaic	6000-4000 B.C.
<input type="checkbox"/> Late Archaic	4000-2000 B.C.
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Woodland	2000-500 B.C.
<input type="checkbox"/> Middle Woodland	500 B.C. - A.D. 900
<input type="checkbox"/> Late Woodland/Archaic	A.D. 900-1600
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact and Settlement	A.D. 1570-1750
<input type="checkbox"/> Rural Agrarian Intensification	A.D. 1680-1815
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural-Industrial Transition	A.D. 1815-1870
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial/Urban Dominance	A.D. 1870-1930
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Modern Period	A.D. 1930-Present
<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Period ( <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric <input type="checkbox"/> historic)	

**III. Prehistoric Period Themes:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Subsistence
<input type="checkbox"/> Settlement
<input type="checkbox"/> Political
<input type="checkbox"/> Demographic
<input type="checkbox"/> Religion
<input type="checkbox"/> Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Adaption

**IV. Historic Period Themes:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
<input type="checkbox"/> Government/Law
<input type="checkbox"/> Military
<input type="checkbox"/> Religion
<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Educational/Cultural
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation

**V. Resource Type:**

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Domestic/Single Dwelling

Known Design Source: \_\_\_\_\_



2750 W-321  
BIRD HILL RD  
GIRDLETREE

①

SOUTH ELEVATION



WO-321  
2750 BIRD HILL RD  
GIRDLE TREE

WEST ELEVATION

③

WO-321  
Girdletree Survey District  
Girdltree  
Public and private

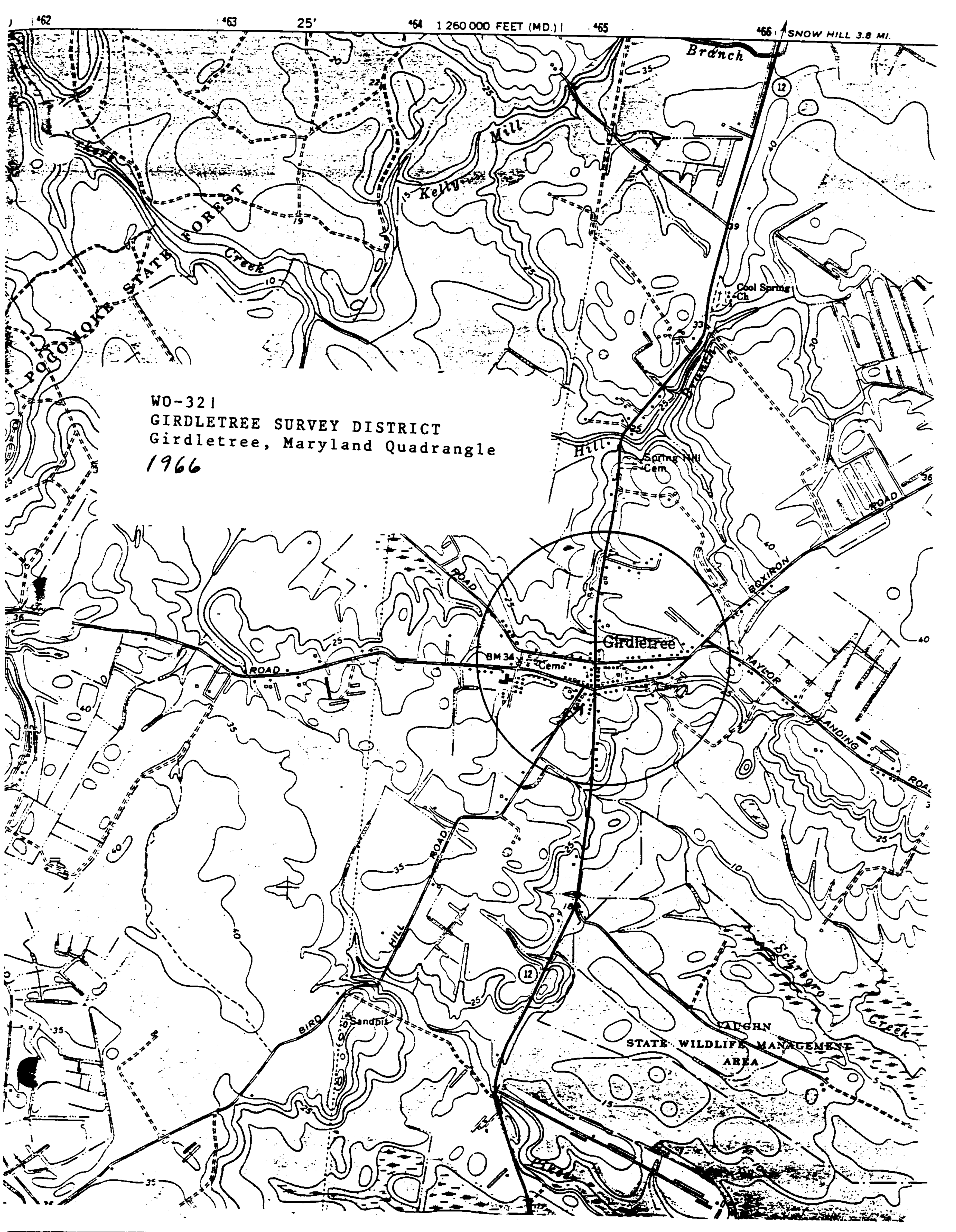
1860-1940

Bishop family history relates that the crossroads village of Girdletree developed around the property of Charles W. and Mary Clayville Bishop during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Family tradition also indicates Charles W. Bishop (1815-1895), while clearing land for his house site, girdled a large beech tree in the process. With the relatively high elevation of the area, the crossroads village was named Girdle Tree Hill, and later, just Girdlrtree.

Perhaps the most significant boost to the region's economy was the completion of the Worcester Railroad from Snow Hill to Franklin City, Virginia on April 7, 1876. Concurrently, the seafood export business expanded with exploitation of Chincoteague bay shellfish. Girdletree was the closest shipping point for oysters, crab, and fish brought in by watermen to Taylors Landing. The Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson atlas, published in 1877, recorded the size of the village at the time. The village map includes over a dozen dwellings, four stores, a steam saw mill, a railroad depot, two churches, and a public school. By the late nineteenth century the village had grown to include a population of 255. So prosperous was the area during the early twentieth century that area businessmen were encouraged to organize a local bank. On January 2, 1902, the Wicomico News announced that the new bank of George L. Barnes & Co. had opened its doors. The prospects in shipping local produce, fruit as well as vegetables, proved so promising that seven different canneries are known to have operated in Girdletree and its vicinity during the early twentieth century. Two of the longest operating

firms were run by Clayton J. Scarborough and W. T. Onley. Unfortunately, like many small rural villages, the economic prosperity faded with the stock market failure in 1929 and the ensuing Depression. The bank was forced to close during the 1930s, and many of the canning operations ceased to function. Since World War II Girdletree has remained fixed largely in size and population.





WO-321  
GIRDLETREE SURVEY DISTRICT  
Girdletree, Maryland Quadrangle  
1966

HISTORIC CONTEXT INFORMATION

Resource Name: GIRDLER SURVEY DISTRICT

MHT Inventory Number: W0-321

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA:

- 1) Historic Period Theme(s): ARCHITECTURE REGION  
TRANSPORTATION  
AGRICULTURE COMMERCE
- 2) Geographic Orientation: COMMUNITY PLANNING  
EASTERN SHORE
- 3) Chronological/Developmental Period(s):  
RURAL AGRARIAN INTENSIFICATION  
URBAN/INDUSTRIAL DOMINANCE
- 4) Resource Type(s):

1. SURVEY DISTRICT

- A. SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING
- B. CHURCHES
- C. RAILROAD STATIONS
- D. COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS
- E. SUPPORT BUILDINGS

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. WO-321

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic GIRDLE TREE HILL

and/or common GIRDLETREE

## 2. Location

street & number Intersection of MD Rte 12 and Boxiron Road ☐ not for publication

city, town Girdletree ☐ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland ☐ county First

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Various owners

street & number telephone no.:

city, town state and zip code

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County Clerk of Court liber

street & number Worcester County Courthouse folio

city, town Snow Hill state MD 21863

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

pository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. WO-321

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Girdletree, historically known as Girdle Tree Hill, is located in southeastern Worcester County at the intersection of MD Route 12 and Onley and Boxiron roads approximately five (5) miles south of Snow Hill. The survey district containing one-hundred (100) contributing buildings dating between 1860 and 1940.

Girdletree is a modest sized rural village that has retained a large degree of its historic integrity. Centered in the village along Route 12 is an intact commercial row of late nineteenth and early century buildings including an early twentieth century brick bank. Other buildings of significance include two churches, the old passenger station (moved), the freight station, as well as several score of houses and a few accompanying outbuildings. Few intrusions have been introduced aside from a new post office and a fire station.

The dwellings that define Girdletree date largely from the fourth quarter of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much of the domestic design follows vernacular two-and-a-half story cross-gabled I-house forms, or ell and tee-shaped Victorian plans. For the most part, these two story houses are embellished with a minimum of exterior decoration aside from eave brackets or turned post porches. A few houses in Girdletree follow the regional stepped or "telescope" form with three distinct roof levels. Also contributing to the district are a number of early twentieth century bungalows or Colonial Revival style dwellings.

Perhaps the most unusual survivals in Girdletree are the passenger and freight stations. The passenger station was moved a short distance and converted to office space. On the other hand the freight depot has remained largely intact.

The two churches in the village include the Girdletree Methodist Church, a third quarter of the nineteenth century structure that has been enlarged with a bell tower and front addition. The other church is the historic black congregation of the village. Labeled the "M. E. Church, 1868-1890," the single-story frame house of worship now houses a congregation known as the "Church of God of Prophecy."

## 8. Significance

Survey No. WO-321

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

### Specific dates

### Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Girdletree, Maryland is an architecturally significant rural village located in southern Worcester County. The crossroads village, located about six miles south of Snow Hill and two miles northwest of Chincoteague Bay, contains approximately one-hundred (100) structures, dating between 1860 and 1940, that contribute to the historic nature of the village. The commercial district, comprising a handful of frame stores and a unused brick bank, is one of the most complete in Worcester County for this size village. Also important is the survival of the passenger and freight stations formerly associated with the Worcester Railroad. The passenger station has been moved a short distance and converted to office space. The freight station is distinctive for its open-ended, but sheltered platform and its original board-and-batten siding. This is the only freight station of this type surviving on the lower Eastern Shore.

The houses that mark the main and side streets of Girdletree offer an interesting mix of mid to late nineteenth and early twentieth century architectural forms. Most prevalent are the two-and-a-half story cross-gabled I-houses with single or two-story rear wings. The village also contains a number of asymmetrically planned dwellings with T- or L-shaped main blocks. A few stepped or "telescope" houses add to the distinctive regional character of the village.

### HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Bishop family history relates that the crossroads village of Girdletree developed around the farm of Charles W. and Mary Clayville Bishop during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Family tradition also indicates that Charles W. Bishop (1815–1895), while clearing land for his house site, girdled a large beech tree in the process. With the relatively high elevation of the area, the crossroads was called Girdle Tree Hill, and later just Girdletree.

Perhaps the most significant boost to the region's economy was the completion of the Worcester Railroad from Snow to Franklin City on April 7, 1876. The Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson atlas, published in 1877,

(continued)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. W0-321

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul B. Touart Architectural Historian

organization Worcester County date 3/12/90

street & number Worcester County Courthouse telephone 301-632-1194

city or town Snow Hill state MD 21863

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

## GIRDLETREE SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

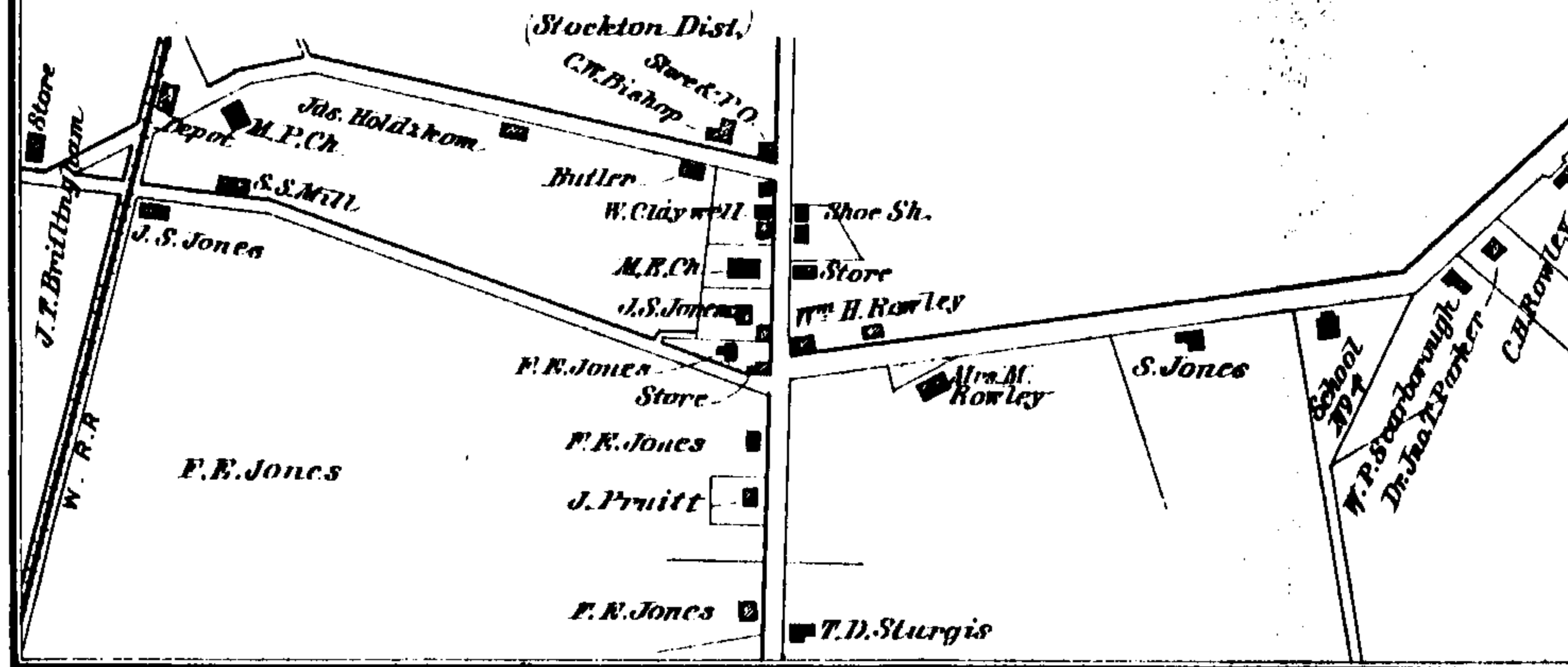
recorded the size of the village at the time. The village map includes over a dozen dwellings, four stores, a steam saw mill, a railroad depot, two churches, and a public school. By the late nineteenth century the village had grown to include a population of 255. So prosperous was the area during the early twentieth century that area businessmen were encouraged to organize a local bank. On January 2, 1902, the Wicomico News announced that the new bank of George L. Barnes & Co. had opened its doors. Unfortunately, like many small rural villages the prosperity of the early twentieth century faded with the stock market failure in 1929 and the Depression that followed. The bank closed in 1930s. Since World War II Girdletree has remained largely unchanged aside from the construction of a new post office and fire department.



# GIRDLE TREE HILL

WORCESTER CO

*(Stockton Dist.)*



# STOCKTON

**Dist. No 8**  
**WORCESTER Co.**

NO-321

**GIRDLETREE HILL BUSINESS REFERENCES.**

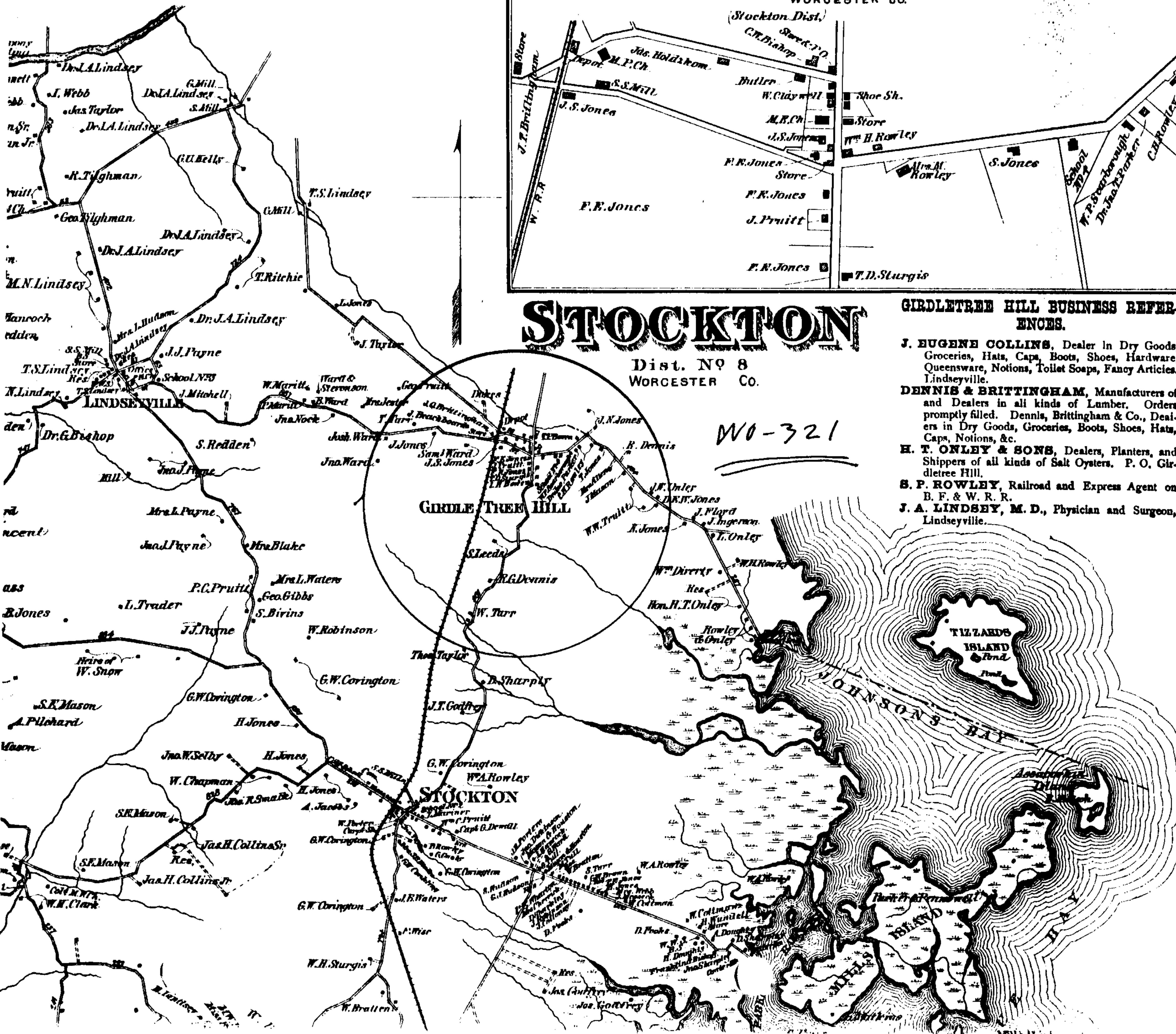
**J. EUGENE COLLINS**, Dealer in Dry Goods,  
Groceries, Hats, Caps, Boots, Shoes, Hardware,  
Queensware, Notions, Toilet Soaps, Fancy Articles.  
Lindseyville.

**DENNIS & BRITTINGHAM**, Manufacturers of  
and Dealers in all kinds of Lumber. Orders  
promptly filled. Dennis, Brittingham & Co., Deal-  
ers in Dry Goods, Groceries, Boots, Shoes, Hats,  
Caps, Notions, &c.

**H. T. ONLEY & SONS, Dealers, Planters, and Shippers of all kinds of Salt Oysters. P. O. Girdlestone Hill.**

**S. P. ROWLEY**, Railroad and Express Agent on  
B. F. & W. R. R.

**J. A. LINDSEY, M. D.,** Physician and Surgeon,  
Lindseyville.





7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

462 463 25' 464 1 260 000 FEET (MD.) 465 466 SNOW HILL 3.8 MI

Branch

Mill

Kelly

POGOMOKE STATE FOREST

Creek

WO-321  
GIRDLETREE SURVEY DISTRICT  
Girdletree, Maryland Quadrangle  
1966

Spring Hill  
Cem.

Girdletree

BM 34

CAUGHN  
STATE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT  
AREA

Scarboro  
Creek